

VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER 2011: CLOSING THE BUDGET GAP

City of Rochester, New York



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the City of Rochester, N.Y. plans for the upcoming fiscal year of 2011-12, Mayor Thomas S. Richards invited public participation utilizing Voice of the Customer sessions as an important source of public input into the budget process. The level of participation in Voice of the Customer was high, with about 600 individuals attending four sessions. Participation was active and engaging and the Mayor attended the full length of all four sessions to garner input.

Below are the ten primary topic areas the public was invited to discuss, with a brief summary of findings on each topic. The body of the report contains more detailed data collected on each topic.

1. **Fire Services** – Public participation was very high regarding fire services. Participants indicated that they do not want to see the Lyell station close, but do want to see reductions in high level positions and want the City to consider a wage freeze.
2. **Police Services** – Participation for police services was moderate. Customers indicated strong concern regarding police overtime costs and had mixed perspectives on whether to reduce the police force.
3. **Emergency Communications and 311** – Participation regarding 911 and 311 services was light. Suggestions included reducing 311 services and considering a wage freeze.
4. **Infrastructure** – Participants desired a wage freeze as well as deferral or cancellation of a number of capital projects. Many suggestions were made regarding reductions in sidewalk snow plowing and changes to the refuse and recycling business model.
5. **Neighborhoods and Business Development** – In neighborhood and business development, deferring capital improvements once again was selected and reductions in inspection activities were mentioned along with reductions in subsidies to businesses and large municipal facilities.
6. **Recreation and Youth Services** – High participation was evident at the Recreation and Youth Services tables with participants suggesting the city close Durand Beach or charge for parking; suggestions for fewer hours at the recreation centers rather than closure, and requests not to reduce funding to the Hillside program.
7. **Library Services** – Library turnout was also very high, with many suggestions for revenue generation along with strong recommendations for reduced hours spread across the city rather than branch closures. This was particularly evident in the southeast quadrant.
8. **Internal Organizational Efficiencies** – Three themes emerged from this group including a wage freeze, reductions in personnel costs and a focus on re-organizing departments or functions for greater efficiencies.
9. **Community & Special Events** – Participants showed a preference for a reduction in Music Fest sponsorship and select reductions in other events, but also a strong preference for revenue generation through admittance fees.
10. **Taxes** – Themes at the taxes table included a desire for new revenues, mixed feelings on raising taxes (perhaps it's acceptable if it saves services), as well as a desire to work with the state to reduce the Maintenance of Effort paid to the city school district.

The open space conferencing process lent itself well to participation by a large number of customers as well as an opportunity to cover a variety of topics. There was a high level of enthusiasm expressed in an open, civil dialogue, unusual for customers dealing with difficult financial circumstances around customer service.

The Mayor expressed gratitude at the end of every session for the community's participation.

BACKGROUND

Voice of the Customer

A Voice of the Customer (VOC) approach is used in both the private and public sectors to identify customer or citizen priorities, needs and concerns. Customers receive and use City services and in turn can provide valuable feedback to help the City identify new opportunities. In addition to VOC, in recent years, the City has also conducted sessions with the Voice of the Faith Community, Voice of the Union, Voice of the Business Community, Voice of the Youth, and Voice of the Employee.

This report and the presentation of data is not a reflection of City strategies or priorities for the budget planning process, but rather a snapshot of community participants' perceptions and opinions on the subjects. The Mayor was very pleased with the high turnout and the passionate and caring dialogue.

Problem Statement

The City of Rochester is planning now for the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2011 and ends June 30, 2012, or fiscal year 2011-12. The Office of Management and Budget estimated a budget gap of \$50 million due to declining revenues such as state aid and sales tax and increasing expenses such as health care and pension costs.

Senior managers, department heads and the Mayor identified a number of ideas for increasing revenues and decreasing expenses in the upcoming year to close this estimated gap. Mayor Richards and Budget Director William Ansbro conducted the VOC public forums to share much more specific budget information at a much earlier point than ever before. The VOC forums also encouraged greater community discussion and education about the many options on the table. Community input has already helped to inform final budget decisions.

Mayor Richards asked participants to consider their personal priorities regarding the value of government services in the wider context of the needs of the city as a whole. The VOC forums also served to demonstrate that people understand the severity of the City's fiscal difficulties and they are willing to talk about it in a civil manner and at the same time, gain an appreciation for the difficult decisions facing the Mayor.

Process

An open space conference process was utilized to gather input about a large number of issues that need to be addressed. This type of conference provided opportunities for participants to indicate their preferences on proposed opportunities for cost savings and provide their own options.

The VOC agenda involved a welcome and introduction by the Mayor and an educational presentation on the current state of the budget challenges facing the City was given and the “open space” process was outlined. Participants were invited to join breakout groups to further discuss the ten table topics, or other topics of their choosing.

Forty-five minutes were allocated for discussion followed by the sharing of major issues from each of the ten topics:

- Fire Services
- Police Services
- Emergency Communications (911) and 311
- Infrastructure
- Neighborhood and Business Development
- Recreation and Youth Services
- Library Services
- Internal Organizational Efficiencies
- Community and Special Events
- Taxes

Additional time was allocated for open discussion and a poster board was available for participants to add notes on any topic. Finally, in addition to verbal and written comments provided at the public forums, individuals who couldn't make one of the VOC sessions could submit comments by calling 311 or via email.

Schedule

The public was invited to participate in the following four public sessions held in each quadrant of the city:

Quadrant	Date	Location	Participants
Northeast	April 20, 2011	David F. Gantt Community Center	75
Southeast	April 27, 2011	South Avenue Community Center	250
Southwest	April 28, 2011	Adams Street Community Center	75
Northwest	May 2, 2011	Edgerton Stardust Ballroom	200

Invitations were sent to neighborhood and community groups, and to faith-based organizations around the city. A news release was issued and a web page was created at: www.cityofrochester.gov/voc2011 to promote the event. Several media attended the sessions and news coverage was considered excellent.

FINDINGS

Participants at each table were asked to vote on possible cuts put forth by the city's senior managers. In addition, participants were asked to identify any alternative cuts they would like the Mayor and the senior managers to consider. In this section, we indicate the number of forum comments, emails and calls received on each topic to provide the reader with a sense of scale of community input on each topic.

This is followed by a tally of votes, by quadrant, for each possible reduction identified by the city. The lists include the estimated savings for each proposed reduction.

In addition, we identify major themes heard from VOC participants for each of the ten major topics. Each major theme includes sample comments and the source of the input.

Table Topic 1: Fire Services

Community Input

The turnout from community members concerned about cuts to fire services was high. In addition to the nearly 200 written comments received at the public forums, 31 individuals submitted input by email or through 311. 208 residents signed a petition to keep the Lyell firehouse open, citing quality of life, recent investment in the firehouse and impacts on insurance premiums. 64 residents signed a petition requesting no layoffs for the Rochester Fire Department.

Votes on City's proposed cuts

	NE North St	SE South Ave	SW Adams	NW Edgerton	Total Votes
Eliminate firefighter overhire (12 FF) [-\$1.0M to -\$1.1M]	1	2	0	3	6
Wage Freeze [-\$1.25M to -\$1.35M]	2	1	1	2	6
Eliminate 2 Midi Units (16 FF) [-\$1.4M to -\$1.5M]	0	1	1	0	2
Reduce Charlotte station (4 Firefighters) [-\$325k to -\$375k]	0	0	1	0	1
Close Lyell Ave Station (20 FF) [-\$1.8M to -\$2.0M]	0	0	0	0	0
Reduce Fire Safety by 2 FF; reduce Community Outreach by 3 FF [-\$450,000 to -\$475,000]	0	0	0	0	0

Themes from Forum Participants

1. Don't close the Lyell Avenue fire station
 - "The Lyell Avenue Fire house is very much needed. I was just in a frantic situation that could have set my apartment and possibly the whole building on fire. The fast response and the expertise of the firemen that arrived kept an electrical fire from happening. Truthfully I was amazed by their skill and realized how much they are needed" (e-mail)
 - "Closing Lyell firehouse would be devastating to neighborhood" (NE)
 - "Firemen are the heroes in my neighborhood. Don't touch" (NE)
 - "We just spent \$250k in renovations on Lyell, why close that one?" (NW)
 - "Don't close Engine 5; there are no other engines in that area" (NW)
 - "My neighborhood loses coverage to fill in when other area has fires" (SE)
 - "How will this affect response time?" (SE)
 - "Fire department arrives well before ambulances" (SE)
 - "Why close or reduce fire houses in the marginalized areas?" (NW)
 - "Why isn't the Mayor closing a fire house in his part of the city?" (NW)
 - "Don't go below necessary staffing levels required to maintain safe staffing." (SE)
 - "Live up to the Four-Year plan; keep citizens and firefighters safe." (SE)
2. Reduce high-level administrative positions in the Fire Department and throughout the city
 - "Cut the Assistant to the Mayor position—too highly paid" (NE)
 - "Cut Deputy Mayor position" (NE)
 - "Make cuts in staff – upper management, not front line" (NW)
 - "Reduce senior firefighters. Sign a contract. Typically firefighters leave en masse after a new contract is enacted." (SE)
3. Consider a wage freeze rather than layoffs
 - "10% minimum across the board cuts in salary and pension across the board for all city employees" (SE)
 - "It would be ok to cut a little bit off the firefighters salaries" (NE)
 - "Freeze pay in the higher positions" (NW)
4. Don't make cuts in firefighter staffing to the Charlotte firehouse
 - "I'm totally opposed to closing the Charlotte fire house. The area needs the fire house and they do a great job" (311 call)
5. Cuts to fire services are acceptable
 - "As a city resident and taxpayer I am in full support of fire department cuts. These cuts will NOT compromise our safety. These cuts will right size our fire department. My support of these cuts are evidenced by:
 - **9% decrease** of total incidents from 2009 to 2010
 - **10 % decrease** in unit responses by fire station and unit from 2009 to 2010" (SE)
 - "I assume you are proposing closing the Lyell Avenue fire station because it is not very busy and another station could cover it. Sounds like a good idea" (e-mail)
 - "Settle fire contract to encourage 20 year firefighters to retire (70 would go)" (SW)

Table Topic 2: Police Services

Community Input

In addition to nearly 50 comments received at the public forums, 10 individuals submitted input by email or through 311 on the topic of police service reductions.

Votes on City's proposed cuts

	NE North St	SE South Ave	SW Adams	NW Edgerton	Total Votes
Wage Freeze [-\$3.1M to -\$3.2M]	4	10	3	10	27
Reduce officer overhire (30 Police Officers) [-\$1.8M to -\$1.9M]	3	4	3	3	13
Suspend Police Officer recruit class for 2011 [-\$800k to -\$900k]	1	3	0	1	5
Eliminate 21 Police Officer positions (primarily from the August, 2010 recruit class) [-\$1.7M to -\$1.8M]	1	1	1	0	3

Themes from Forum Participants

1. Reduce overtime costs for Police services
 - "Revise overtime and see what could be covered by event promoters etc. Use user fees to offset police costs."
 - "Police pad their retirement with overtime pay" (SE, SW)
 - "The public and the media press have made police overtime a prime example of how Civil Servant employees are abusing the system and costing the tax payers millions of dollars" (e-mail)
 - "If police positions are cut, please make sure that overtime does not eat up the savings" (e-mail)
2. Do not cut police personnel
 - "Cuts will hurt diversity" (NE)
 - "We need all the police officers we have" (NE)
 - "Don't cut police, they need additional help to fight drugs" (NE)
 - "Years ago when 911 became operational we had a vote on Metro Police. We obviously should have done it" (e-mail)
 - "The department is already doing more with less, let's not make this "Mission Impossible" against crime by reducing the funding for the RPD" (e-mail)
 - "Please do not eliminate positions or potential positions" (NW)
3. Police force cuts are acceptable
 - "Layoff police personnel. Suspend 2011 recruits and 2010 academy" (NE)
 - "We have highest ever officer count but Rochester has shrunk. Are 21 cuts enough to right-size?"

Table Topic 3: Emergency Communications (911) & 311

Community Input

While no email or 311 comments directly addressed 911 or 311 services, the community forums generated approximately a dozen comments and suggestions.

Votes on City's proposed cuts

	NE North St	SE South Ave	SW Adams	NW Edgerton	Total Votes
Reduce 311/One Call to City Hall staffing; Reduce overnight and weekend 311 hours [-\$100k]	1	9	5	3	18
Wage Freeze [ECD: -\$275k to -\$325k]	2	3	6	3	14
Implement auto-voice response system for initial screening at 311 [-\$160,000]	0	3	3	2	8
Consolidate 311 with 911	0	2	4	1	7

Themes from Participants

1. Consider a wage freeze or decreases in pay
 - "Have politicians take a wage cut." (SE)
 - "Only do a wage freeze if it's citywide" (NW)
2. Reduce 311 services
 - "Reduce or eliminate 311" (e-mail)
 - "Return police reporting to RPD." (SE)
 - "311 system really needs to be looked at. I think it's a waste of time and money when you call there it's like your bothering the person who answers the phone and they don't get all the info that you give them either they need to be retrained or shut it down" (e-mail)
 - "311 seems to fit in the "nice to have" category. With online resources and a phone book people can get what they need." (SE)

Table Topic 4: Infrastructure

Community Input

In addition to approximately 50 comments received at the public forums, 17 people submitted comments regarding City infrastructure services via email or 311.

Votes on City's proposed cuts

	NE North St	SE South Ave	SW Adams	NW Edgerton	Total Votes
Wage Freeze [-\$1.0M to -\$1.1 M]	2	6	4	2	14
Eliminate Clean Sweep [-\$175k to -\$225k]	4	3	2	1	10
Defer street design and survey work [-\$275k to -\$350k]	2	0	7	0	9
Reduce sidewalk plowing service level—increase plow threshold from 3” to 4” [-\$125k to -\$175k or \$4 per household]	0	3	5	3	11
Reduce Graffiti removal efforts [-\$25k to -\$50k]	2	1	4	1	8
Eliminate funding for art installations [-\$225k]	0	4	3	2	9
Defer planned capital improvements to City buildings, e.g. City Hall, DES Mt Read facility, Edgerton Community Center [-\$668,000]	1	3	2	1	7
Defer reconstruction of Ridgeway Ave for 1 yr [-\$1.4M]	3	1	2	0	6
Defer planned improvements to Manhattan Square Park for 2 yrs [-\$2.8 M]	1	3	2	0	6
Defer reconstruction of Seneca Ave for 2 years [-\$2.6 M]	2	1	2	3	8
Eliminate funding for planting street trees and defer the pruning and trimming of street trees for one year [-\$500k]	0	0	2	3	5

Themes from Participants

1. Defer capital improvements
 - “Defer Port and Marina, Artwalk, Bulls Head, Main and Plymouth, Culver Rd Armory, Academy Bldg, Midtown, Erie Harbor, Voter’s Block” (NE, NW)
 - “Postpone Marina project” (NE)
 - “Beechwood was given a lot of money and it looks terrible. Something is wrong with these projects.” (SE)

- “I would like you to make cuts in all new construction first. Bulls Head Plaza, west side police station, Manhattan Square Park, reconstructions of Ridgeway and Seneca Avenue” (e-mail)
- “Defer capital improvements to city buildings based on cost effectiveness” (NW)

2. Reduce sidewalk plowing

- “Stop sidewalk plowing outside of downtown” (SE)
- “Do sidewalk plowing on alternate sides of street on alternate years” (SE)
- “Start fining businesses and residential owners for not shoveling sidewalks” (NE, SW)
- “Stop plowing sidewalks in front of businesses and residences. Ticket the property owners if they do not take care of it like they are supposed to” (e-mail)

3. Make changes to the refuse/recycling business model

- “Pick up recyclables biweekly or monthly” (NE)
- “Reduce refuse pick up to every other week” (SE)
- “Look into routes for trash pickup” (SE)
- “Pay-per-bag programs have been successful in certain areas” (SW)
- “Trucks should pick up garbage and recycling (combo trucks)” (SE)
- “No Saturday pickup after holidays” (NW)

Table Topic 5: Neighborhood and Business Development

Community input

Approximately 60 comments were generated on this topic at the public forums, and an additional 7 people submitted comments regarding neighborhood and business development services.

Votes on City's proposed cuts

	NE North St	SE South Ave	SW Adams	NW Edgerton	Total Votes
Defer redevelopment of aqueduct due to lack of federal funds [-\$1M in city funds]	2	8	2	4	16
Sell Norton NSC and move to East Side Police Station on Clinton Ave. [-\$225k]	2	8	3	3	16
Eliminate three Code Enforcement Officers – longer wait times [-\$175k to -\$225k]	2	4	1	7	14
Reduce subsidy to Convention Center [-\$150k to -\$250k]	3	10	1	0	14
Suspend planning for Bulls Head Plaza and new Westside Police Station [-\$7M]	3	3	2	3	11
Sell South Clinton NSC and move to another City facility [-\$225k]	2	5	2	1	10
Reduce Economic Development, Real Estate, Housing staff – Reduced services for Focused Investment Strategy services [-\$350k to -\$425k]	3	4	1	0	8
Zero site development funding for one year, reducing potential development [-\$1M]	2	4	2	0	8
Wage Freeze [-\$200k to -\$250k]	3	1	2	2	8

Themes from Participants

1. Make changes (reductions) to code enforcement
 - “Keep CEOs but close NSC offices” (NE)
 - “Eliminate 2/3 of inspection positions” (SE)
 - “Get rid of NSC Administrators. A waste of money” (SE)
 - “Move inspection tickets to city court” (SE)
 - “Make inspections complaint-driven or new construction only” (SE)
 - “Increase inspection fines and make enforcement in compliance with NYS code” (NW)
2. Consider a wage freeze/salary reductions
 - “10% decrease in all payroll; most city employees make 3 times the average city resident’s income.” (SE)

3. Make changes in zoning functions
 - “Change from function to form zoning (see 30% savings in Miami)” (SE)
 - “Enforce permits, housing maintenance, fencing heights. Illegal businesses, car repairs, drug dealing” (SE)
 - “Be sure building code welcomes home sized windmills” (SE)
 - “Streamline permit applications so new developments get to open sooner” (SE)
 - “Raise permit fees” (SE)
4. Reduce business subsidies
 - “Reduce subsidy to Pier 45” (SE)
 - “Stop giving years of tax amnesty to developers. The average citizen is pretty tired of hearing how you are wanting to do things like charge us for parking at Durand Eastman (which saves a pittance) while you extend millions in savings to developers under the guise of creating jobs” (e-mail, SW)
 - “Find [l]aces in the city that are not paying taxes and correct it (places that have a church sign)” (e-mail)
 - “The War Memorial, the Frontier field, and the Soccer stadium all eat tax revenue - the users should pay more” (e-mail)
 - “Collect bad debt taxes/interest due by Wilmore for Sibley building” (SE)

Table Topic 6: Recreation and Youth Services

Community Input

In addition to nearly 120 comments received at the public forums, approximately 16 people submitted comments through email and 311 regarding Recreation and Youth services.

Votes on City's proposed cuts

	NE North St	SE South Ave	SW Adams	NW Edgerton	Total Votes
Close Durand Beach [-\$150k to -\$250k]	1	43	31	16	91
Charge for Parking at Durand Beach (revenue)	13	15	18	19	65
Eliminate city funding for Teen Court [-\$50k]	4	20	4	4	32
Wage Freeze [-\$140k to -\$180k]	3	9	12	7	31
Cut School 28 After School program [-\$50k to - \$125k]	2	0	5	4	11
Eliminate Saturday hours at recreation centers [- \$100k to -\$150k]	0	6	0	3	9
Eliminate contribution to Hillside Work Scholarship program [-\$400k]	1	0	1	4	6
Close South Avenue Recreation Center [-\$175 - \$225k]	3	0	1	2	6

Themes from Participants

1. Durand – close it or reduce hours, pay for parking
 - “Reduce hours of Durand Beach, weekends only, stay open on holidays” (NE)
 - “Charge small entry fee for Durand” (SE)
 - “Will charge at Durand offset the operating costs?” (NW)
 - “I would rather pay for parking than see it close” (e-mail)
 - “Before Durand put in life guards it was a very popular place for boaters to go and anchor off the shore. Since the beach opened with life guards, it has created quite a problem for home owners in our area (who are paying very high taxes to live there and get nothing but aggravation from trespassing boaters) to the extent that we can't even use our own backyards!” (e-mail)
2. Reduce recreation center hours instead of closing
 - “Have a later morning start at recreation centers, after 12pm” (NE)
 - “Use volunteers, student interns to help staff” (SE)
 - “Keep recreation centers open. They are extensions of home” (SE)
 - “With no recreation centers we'll have more crime” (SE, SW)
 - “Closing South Ave recreation center will drive down property taxes and urban by choice families will move. School #12 is already losing gym programming” (SE)
 - “Keep open the South Avenue recreation center for Monday night women's volleyball. We've been playing there for 20 to 25 years” (e-mail)
 - “Cut additional hours, keep open 2-8pm” (NW)

3. Don't reduce Hillside funding

- "Reduce contribution to Hillside by 50% instead of eliminating" (SE)
- "HWSP – services include tutoring, job training, college tours, career services. Don't cut!" (SE)
- "While many proposed cuts are painful, especially the laying-off of new police recruits, there is only one item that I must speak up for: the Hillside Work-Scholarship Program. We can't afford to waste another generation of youth" (e-mail)

Table Topic 7: Library Services

Community Input

In addition to approximately 65 comments received at the public forums, approximately 37 people submitted comments via email or 311, 220 individual signed a petition to save Charlotte branch, 150 signed a petition to save the Highland branch, and nearly 20 signed a petition to save the Winton Library.

Votes on City's proposed cuts

	NE North St	SE South Ave	SW Adams	NW Edgerton	Total Votes
Wage Freeze [-200k to -\$250k]	0	3	2	23	28
Eliminate neighborhood library services for Highland [-\$250k to -\$300k]	0	2	0	0	2
Eliminate neighborhood library services for Winton (N. Winton/Browncroft neighborhoods) [-\$305k to -\$375k]	0	0	0	1	1
Eliminate neighborhood library services for Charlotte neighborhood [-\$275k to -\$350k]	0	0	0	0	0

Themes from Participants

1. Don't close the Highland branch
 - "Keep Highland Library open – has the 4th highest circulation and is most cost effective; only open 36 hours."
 - "Highland library can be closed as Brighton library is close by"
 - "The Highland/school 12/South Ave Recreation 1970s model was used for Ryan Center— why replicate the model then fail to support it?"
 - "~ 780 kids at school 12, 2nd largest elementary school, absurd to think a library should be closed at Highland."
2. Don't close the Winton branch
 - I rely on Winton branch especially in this economy, to read books and view movies. Not owning a car, if this branch closes I will not be able to get to a library in the winter.
 - My family has lived in Rochester for 23 years. The Winton Road Library is a vital part of our neighborhood and the busiest branch in the city. Closing this branch would be counter constructive and have a negative impact
3. Don't close the Charlotte branch
 - Don't close Charlotte! (NW)
 - "Charlotte has highest circulation; it is heavily used, please do not close" (NW)

4. Libraries are critical to neighborhoods
 - Libraries are every bit as essential to communities as police or other services. There is no democratic society without libraries. (SE)
 - CSD is closing elementary school libraries. Where will our children experience a library? (SE)
 - With literacy problem in the city, closing libraries is the wrong direction" (NE)
 - Cutting libraries will drive away middle class families, decrease property values and result in lower revenues" (SE)
 - Job seekers use these services such as career resources and internet (SE)
 - Libraries are inexpensive compared to other expensive projects like Manhattan Square Park (NE)
5. Reduce across the board; don't close a branch
 - Consider across- the-city reductions rather than closures (reduce all branches) (NE)
 - Close on Saturdays (SE)
6. Generate new revenues to support the libraries
 - "Move offices, videos etc from old Rundel to Gleason Building. Close or rent old Rundel Building. (SE)
 - Add a shipping fee of 10 cents per book returned to the wrong library. Could generate \$250k" (SW)
 - "Add annual membership fee" (NW)
 - "Add video late fees, shipping fees" (NW)

Table Topic 8: Internal Organizational Efficiencies

Community Input

In addition to nearly 90 comments received at the public forums, 27 individuals submitted input by email or through 311 on the topic of internal organizational efficiencies or city policies.

Votes on City's proposed cuts

	NE North St	SE South Ave	SW Adams	NW Edgerton	Total Votes
Wage Freeze-IT, Finance, HR, OMB, Mayor's Office, Law	3	13	4	4	24
Internal consolidations and restructuring of management [more than \$1M savings]	1	9	3	2	15
Reduce budget analysts– fewer mgt studies [-175k]	2	9	2	0	13
Reduce OPI staffing [-100k to -\$150k]	3	7	2	0	12
Reduce hearing sites during 2012 citywide reassessment [-\$50k to -\$75k]	3	4	2	3	12
Delay software purchase for payroll/personnel system [-\$150k to -\$225k]	0	5	3	1	9
Reduce administrative staff due to Process and Systems Integration [save more than \$100k]	2	3	1	1	7
Use seasonal employees for seasonal services	0	3	2	0	5

Themes from Participants

1. Consider a wage freeze
 - “Reduce city hall wages by 10%” (SE)
 - “Wage freeze for Fire, Police, 911” (NE)
 - “Unions should share the pain on a wage freeze” (SW)
 - “Cut hours, cut salaries, but do not lay off people” (SE)
2. Reduce personnel costs
 - “Have staff pay more for health insurance” (NE)
 - “Cap Senior staff pay to a multiple of city resident average income” (NE)
 - “How is it fair for city employees to receive \$82k to \$106k when the average age for citizens is \$29k? you are supposed to be civil servants” (SE)
 - “Cut management before cutting workers. Workers provide service, mgt doesn't” (SE)
 - “Retirement incentives- will help reduce deficit” (SE)
 - “Should have one boss for every 50 employees, not every 15-20” (e-mail)
 - “Employees should share more of the benefits cost” (NW)

3. Conduct re-organizations to improve efficiencies
 - “Finance consolidation (budget / finance/ treasurer)” (SE)
 - “Less administrative top heaviness. Why do we have a commissioner of DES when in the old days the city engineer was the manager of all?” (e-mail)
 - “Reduce IT spending by outsourcing email systems to Google” (SW, e-mail)
 - “Merge city and county civil service system” (SW)
 - “Eliminate Municipal Violations Bureau and send tickets to Rochester city courts” (SW)

Table Topic 9: Community and Special Events

Community Input

In addition to the nearly 35 comments received at the public forum, 2 people submitted comments regarding community and special events via email or 311.

Votes on City's proposed cuts

	NE North St	SE South Ave	SW Adams	NW Edgerton	Total Votes
Reduce 2012 Music Fest sponsorship [-\$75k]	0	12	1	9	22
Eliminate funding for Tour de New York Bike event [-\$110k]	2	13	0	4	19
Reduce 2012 Jazz Festival funding [-\$75k]	1	9	1	6	17
Add admittance fee to Party in the Park concert series [+\$75k to \$100k]	2	6	5	3	16
Wage Freeze [-\$20k to -\$40k]	0	7	1	0	8
Reduce funding to ethnic festivals, film festivals, community forums [-\$35k to -\$45k]	0	7	0	1	8

Themes from Participants

1. Some reductions in special events are appropriate
 - "Reductions should be uniform and across the board-no favoritism" (NE)
 - "Party in the Park should be suspended until economy recovers" (SE)
 - "Jazz festival is on its feet, it should be cut" (NW)
2. Generate new revenues
 - "Eliminate police support costs at profit based events such as East End festival" (SE)
 - "Consider charging fees but do not cut these events" (SE)
 - "Important to get suburbs to pay for their fair share of community events. Tom Richards needs to talk to Maggie Brooks re: Police OT at events" (SE)
 - "Get corporate funding for tour de NY Bike event" (SE)
 - "I regularly attend the 'Party in the Park (ing lot)' (sure miss Man. Sq. Pk as the venue), along with the Lilac Festival, and the occasional event at High Falls. There is already a large number of people working the gates, checking ID's, etc. Given that fact, why not start charging a nominal fee to attend" (e-mail)
 - "Obtain corporate funding for events" (NW)
3. Don't cut special events
 - "We are a town of culture, community events attract people to live in and visit Rochester" (SE)
 - "Bike event promotes canals, bike paths. Also community health" (SE)
 - "Party in the park gives young people a place to celebrate the summer" (SE)
 - "Opposed to any cut in Jazz Festival – the best downtown draw we have!" (SE)

Table Topic 10: Taxes

Community Input

While no email or 311 comments directly address 911 or 311 services, the public forums generated about 55 individual comments and suggestions.

Votes on City's proposed cuts

	NE North St	SE South Ave	SW Adams	NW Edgerton	Total Votes
Increase taxes by 2% [\$3.1M]	0	4	2	2	8
Increase water rates 3.5% [\$1.0M to \$1.1M]	0	2	3	5	10
Increase local works charges 2% (snowplowing, street maintenance, sidewalk replacements [\$400k to \$600k])	0	1	6	3	10
State Mandated City School District Cost (no change allowed) [\$119.1 M]	0	1	2	2	5

Themes from Participants

1. Generate new revenues to save services
 - "Institute additional fees for extraordinary items to be picked up by refuse crews (construction debris, appliances)" (NE)
 - "Payments in lieu of taxes by institutions (NFPs, educational)" (SE)
 - "Progressive increase in property taxes and water based on property value" (SE)
2. Don't raise taxes or fees
 - "No tax or fee increase" (NE)
 - "Property Tax break for city/RCSD employees to encourage city residency/homeownership" (SE)
3. Higher taxes are acceptable if they save services
 - "People leave the city for communities with HIGHER taxes that have good services!" (SE)
 - "Increase taxes to prevent cuts in services" (e-mail)
 - "Tax incentive for companies with more city residents" (SE)
 - "Would rather pay more taxes than lose youth programs" (SW)
4. Work with the state to reduce MOE/ get fair share of state AID
 - "Continue to lobby for fairer rates for upstate cities" (NW)

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John Hilton

Arleen Hyland

Carla Johnson

Kim Jones

Norm Jones

Jennifer Lenio

Tony Jordan

Phil LaPorta

Kevin Loughran

Shelly Matthews

JudieLynn McAvinney

Matt McCarthy

Kathy McManus

Tom Miller

Dave Mohney

Laura Nobles

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